

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Transformation of Space in the Galle Fort (Sri Lanka) by its Inhabitants

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In 1988, Galle Fort in Sri Lanka was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO. The new historic-preservation regulatory setup that came with this designation displaced its inhabitants in their own homes. This thesis examines on how these inhabitants negotiate preservation regulations and the government's effort to maintain a "world heritage" status based on their view. It focuses on how people adapt to the newly regulated environment and create spaces for their own daily practices.

This study identifies that there are people who follow the government rules and transform themselves into subjects, while others break government rules and create the lived spaces they want. In-between are the majority of people who both become subjects of the space and also negotiate with the government rules to create their (negotiated) living environments. Although the government has more power, the people with less power have been transforming the space to meet their own needs and create a sense of place.